

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PGOV WB GW

SUBJECT: CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT SPEECH IN BERLIN

REF: BONN 15181

1. CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT, PRINCIPAL SPEAKER AT BERLIN SPD PARTY MEETING AT CONGRESS HALL SEPTEMBER 29, SPEAKING FOR 70 MINUTES ON BASICALLY ECONOMIC MATTERS. APPARENT THAT SCHMIDT WAS MAKING CAMPAIGN SPEECH DIRECTED TOWARD LAENDER ELECTIONS THIS FALL AND EARLY NEXT YEAR RATHER THAN ADDRESSING SPECIAL BERLIN CAUCAS.

2. MOST WARMLY RECEIVED SCHMIDT COMMENT WAS NON-ECONOMIC REFERENCE TO RECENT GDR CONSTITUTION CHANGES. SCHMIDT EMOTIONALLY ASSERTED THAT HUNDREDS OF YEARS OF COMMON GERMAN HISTORY COULD NOT BE WIPED OUT BY FEW PEN STROKES. NOT EVEN, HE ADDED SARCASTICALLY, IF "GERMAN" WAS REMOVED FROM GERMAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC. (NUMBER OF LOCAL SPD LEADERS PRESENT COMMENTED TO MISSION OFFICER THAT THEY WERE NOT SURPRISED BY CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES, BUT THEY FULLY SUPPORTED SCHMIDT LINE.)

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3. SCHMIDT RENEWED HIS EARLIER APPEAL TO SPD NOT TO ENGAGE

IN IDEOLOGICAL AND INTELLECTUAL DEBATES WHICH GO OVER HEAD OF AVERAGE MAN (BONN 15181). RATHER, PARTY SHOULD CONCENTRATE ON PRAGMATIC SOLUTIONS TO CURRENT PROBLEMS SUCH AS UNEMPLOYMENT. HE REMINDED SPD MEMBERS THAT INVESTMENT IMPORTANT FOR FUTURE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND OBSERVED THAT UNREALISTIC LABLR DEMANDS IN OTHER COUNTRIES, PARTICULARLY UK, HAVE CAUSED ECONOMIC DISRUPTION. SCHMIDT ASSERTED THAT GERMAN ECONOMIC STABILITY WAS DUE TO POLITICAL STABILITY. WILLINGNESS GERMAN TRADE UNIONS TO WORK WITH MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNMENT WAS IN BEST INTERESTS OF COUNTRY.

4. ONLY LAST TEN MINUTES OF SPEECH WERE DEVOTED TO BERLIN MATTERS. SCHMIDT PROMISED FRG WOULD KEEP BERLIN'S INTERESTS IN MIND IN DEALING WITH EASTERN EUROPE. HE QUOTED BRANDT'S STATEMENT THAT RELATIONS BETWEEN BONN AND MOSCOW COULD ONLY BE AS GOOD AS SITUATION IN BERLIN. SCHMIDT SAID FRG SUPPORTED BERLIN SENAT'S CONTENTION THAT GDR MUST RESCIND INCREASE OF COMPULSORY CURRENCY-EXCHANGE REQUIREMENTS FOR VISITS AS PRELUDE TO FUTRE BONN-EAST BERLIN DISCUSSIONS.

5. COMMENT: PARTY STALWARTS PLEASED WITH SCHMIDT'S PERFORMANCE, INCLUDING HIS LECTURE ON ECONOMICS. IN SUBSEQUENT RESOLUTION, DELEGATES PRAISES SCHMIDT'S REAFFIRMATION OF FEDERAL SUPPORT FOR BERLIN AND CALLED ON SOVIET UNION AND GDR TO OBSERVE MORE STRICTLY AND UTILIZE MORE FULLY QUADRIPARTITE AGREEMENT. KLEIN

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